

**MINUTES  
ENTERPRISE ZONE COMMISSION MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2004**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Stazzoni at 5:02 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present: Biede, Flahive, Hornbeck, Primmer and Stazzoni

Absent: Buchanan, Jares, Prichard, and Reiners

CD Staff: Brenda Kunz

Others: Mark Norman representing the Pottawattamie County Growth Alliance and Mark McKeever and Paula Danker representing Welcome Homes, Inc.

**3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Motion by Hornbeck, second by Biede to adopt the agenda as printed. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**4. APPROVAL – MINUTES OF DECEMBER 29, 2003**

Motion by Biede, second by Primmer to adopt the minutes as printed. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**5. PROOF OF PUBLICATION**

Presented by staff.

**6. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS**

a. WELCOME HOMES, INC.

Kunz summarized the project for the Commission. This application is for Phase I, Round 2 of the City's Katelman redevelopment project. City Council awarded four lots in Round 2 to Welcome Homes, making them the only applicant eligible for EZ benefits. This application is for four homes that range from 1,049 to 1,522 sq. ft. in size. The homes will have three bedrooms and attached two car garages. The total project investment is approximately \$485,500 and of the four homes being built, three will be valued at \$122,000 and one will be valued at \$119,500. Welcome Homes has estimated that their EZ benefits will total \$69,111.33.

Paula Danker spoke about the home's amenities, including low-e windows, vinyl siding, power humidifier and that they are pre-wired for a security system. She further explained to the Commission the difference between their house plans: the Amber, the Brandy, the Erica and the Hannah. Mark McKeever added that Welcome Homes installs a 14 S.E.E.R. air conditioner and 90% plus efficient furnace. Danker stated that they are the only approved VA builder in town.

Motion by Primmer, second by Flahive to concur with staff recommendation and approve the EZ application for Welcome Homes, Inc. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

After the vote was recorded, McKeever said that he is very proud of this project and is thankful to be participating in it.

\*Buchanan arrived at 5:10 p.m.\*

b. AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE COMPANY, INC.

Prior to reviewing the EZ application for American Republic Insurance Company, Inc. (ARIC), the Commission had a discussion about what space was still available in the Omni Business Centre for lease.

Kunz introduced Mark Norman, representing the Pottawattamie County Growth Alliance who has been working closely with the company. Norman stated that the company is based in Des Moines and they have developed a model for a direct marketing program for insurance related products. No cold calls will be made; contact will only be made with those people who have expressed an interest in the company's services. This expansion project will result in the creation of 130 jobs. Of these jobs, 120 will be direct sales representatives who will make \$30,000 per year with an annual bonus of \$10,000 to \$20,000. This is a company that responded to a direct mailing from the Growth Alliance to over 8,000 companies.

Primmer questioned how the jobs would be filled. Norman replied that the Iowa Workforce Development Center would be taking applications. However the company is still negotiating their lease with the Omni management. Council Bluffs is currently the "preferred site" for this project, although a company decision has not officially been made yet.

Norman said that the company is also applying for CEBA assistance from the State and asking the City and the Alliance for local incentives. The Iowa Department of Economic Development's Board is scheduled to review ARIC's application on February 19, 2004 and the company hopes to move quickly after that. They would like to be operational in Council Bluffs by June 1, 2004.

Stazzoni asked why the Council Bluffs location was chosen over others, especially since the company had just recently acquired a company in Omaha, Nebraska. Buchanan replied that they are an Iowa company and the availability of a highly trained insurance labor force was attractive to them. Flahive also spoke about the skilled labor force. Stazzoni questioned the company's investment and what they would pay for. Norman replied they would pay for the computer equipment, furniture and fixtures and working capital. Stazzoni also asked about the job classification. Norman responded that the company plans to have 120 direct sales representatives, six supervisors, one sales manager and three clerical staff.

Flahive questioned the company's need for only 19,000 sq. ft. of space for such a large labor force. Norman replied that the company would probably run two shifts and they were very judicious with their use of space.

Motion by Primmer, second by Biede to concur with staff recommendation and approve the EZ application for American Republic Insurance Company, Inc. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

None

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Primmer, second by Biede to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.